THE MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI SHIBU SOREN): (a) and (b) There is no proposal to revive Bharat Gold Mines Limited (BGML) at Kolar Gold Fields, Karnataka which has been declared closed under Section 25(0) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 with effect from 1st March, 2001.

(c) A total number of 5,485 employees have been separated under Voluntary Retirement SchemeA/oluntary Separation Scheme/Special Terminal Benefit Package, which were opened from time to time in BGML.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of reply to (a) and (b) above.

Barbed wire fencing along Indo-Bangladesh border in Tripura

*126. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how far the erection of barbed wire fencing along Indo-Bangla border in Tripura has been completed;

(b) the number of dwelling houses on the other side of the fence belonging to residents of the State of Tripura;

(c) appropriate steps being taken to provide alternative houses to the affected families; and

(d) by when the work of fencing is likely to be over?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGHUPATHY): (a) So far 141.30 kms of fencing has been completed in Tripura out of 736 kms sanctioned in 2000.

(b) and (c) Approximately 16,749 houses from 160 villages fall within 150 Yards from the International Border. Gates have been provided at suitable locations along the border fencing for facilitating easy movement of these villagers without any hindrance. However, wherever private lands are acquired for erecting border fencing, suitable compensation is paid to the affected families.

(d) The fencing work in Tripura is scheduled to be completed by 2006.

Plight of villagers in drought affected districts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka

*127. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news

report informing that villagers, mainly farm labourers, in the drought affected districts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have been eating rats to satisfy their hunger;

(b) if so, the details of investigation carried out, if any, into the plight of the affected farm labourers;

(c) reasons for not enabling the affected villagers to access reliefs under the Central Government funded/sponsored anti-poverty programmes and food security scheme, particularly, SGRY and SGSY; and

(d) steps taken, if any, pursuant to the news report to ameliorate the condition of the affected families so far?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) As per information furnished by the State Governments of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu the report appearing in the Indian Express dated 11.06.2004 is not based on facts.

The Government of Karnataka has reported that no such incident has come to their knowledge. The Government of Tamil Nadu has reported that District Collectors concerned, especially Thanjavur and Thiruvarur Districts have been asked to investigate the matter and also informed that there is absolutely no incident of starvation deaths nor has anybody been forced to eat rats for survival. All these cases reported are where people routinely eat rats whether there is a drought or not.

Anti-poverty Programme and Food Security Schemes under SGRY and SGSY have been fully carried out in the Drought affected Districts of Tamil Nadu as reported by the State Government.

During the year 2003-2004, massive Employment Generation Programme was taken up in the drought affected districts. The Ministry of Rural Development released 2.45 lakh tonnes of rice to the State of Tamil Nadu under SGRY and 6.79 lakh tonnes of foodgrains under Special Component of SGRY during 2003-04. During the current year (2004-05), under SGRY, 1.71 lakh tonnes foodgrains have been released so far to Tamil Nadu. The Ministry had released, 3.46 lakh tonnes of foodgrains under normal SGRY and 6.80 lakh tonnes foodgrains under Special Component of SGRY during 2003-04 to State of Karnataka. During the current year (2004-05), 1.46 lakh tonnes foodgrains under SGRY normal scheme and 2.40 lakh tonnes under Special Component of SGRY have been released to Karnataka. The Government of India Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation has released 7.29 lakh tonnes foodgrains under National Calamity Contingency Fund free of cost to the State Government of

Karnataka during 2003-04. In Tamil Nadu 3.04 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains allocated free of cost to the State during 2003-04.

The Government of Tamil Nadu have also released a cash component of Rs.57.25 crores and allotted it to different districts The Government of India Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation has released Rs.33.99 crores under Calamity Relief Fund and Rs.298.16 crores under National Calamity Contingency Funds to the Karnataka State during 2003-04. Under Normal SGRY, Rs. 25.00 crore during 2003-04 and Rs. 20.03 crore during the current year (2004-05) have been released to the State of Karnataka. Rs. 46.78 crores have been released under Calamity Relief Fund and Rs. 173.35 crores under National Calamity Contingency Fund to the State of Tamil Nadu during 2003-04. Under Normal SGRY during 2003-04, Rs.36.71 crore and Rs.23.46 crore during the current year have been released to the State of Tamil Nadu.

Concessions sought by weavers of Andhra Pradesh

*128. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state

(a) whether a delegation of Andhra Pradesh weavers has sought certain concessions and measures to revive handlooms, handicrafts and powerlooms in the unorganized sector; and

(b) if so, the details of their demands and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) Representations have been received from Andhra Pradesh weavers regarding measures for the handloom sector.

(b) The main demand in the representations pertains to withdrawal of the excise duty on hank yarn and opening of yarn banks. The Government of India is implementing the Mill Gate Price Scheme, under which 15 yarn depots have been approved till now in Andhra Pradesh for the handloom sector. The Scheme for Reimbursement of CENVAT on hank yarn was introduced *w.e.f.* 01.04.2003. Under the Scheme duty free yarn of the value of Rs. 1588.85 lakh has bean supplied to weavers in Andhra Pradesh by the implementing agency in 2003-04. Further, in his Budget Speech of 8th July, 2004, Finance Minister has proposed to introduce a new tax regime for the Textile Sector under which the mandatory CENVAT chain will stand abolished and there will be no mandatory excise duty on pure cotton, wool and silk, whether it is fibre, yarn, fabric or garment.